

## HARARE: FROM A EUROPEAN SETTLER-COLONIAL ‘SUNSHINE CITY’ TO A ‘ZHINGZHONG’ AFRICAN CITY

**Abstract:** Fifteen years after Zimbabwe’s political independence and Black majority rule, Rakodi (1995) concluded that Harare, the capital city, remained quintessentially a settler colonial city. Then, Harare had not yet experienced the full impacts of ‘neo-liberalism’ as in Nairobi or the suburbanization of office and commercial development as in Johannesburg. In view of significant political economy transformations since the 1990s, this paper aims to provide a systematic interpretation of ongoing transitions that characterise the city. Informed by a systemic spatio-temporal and historical analysis it illustrates how ongoing post 1990s foundational restructuring of the economy centred on *jambanja* have transformed Harare from a settler colonial to a highly informalised ‘*zhingzhong*’ African city.

Key words: Harare, Zimbabwe, post-colonial, *zhingzhong* African city, sunshine city, *jambanja*

### **Introduction: settler-colonial past and unsettled present**

In a pivotal publication, Rakodi (1995) concluded that notwithstanding the real and growing problems of administration, land, housing and service delivery (Zinyama et al. 1993), Harare continued as a settler colonial city with structural changes neither to its economy nor institutions. It appeared that Harare “... could be in Europe and yet in many ways European influences, distorted through a settler prism had formed the city...” (Rakodi, 1995: 274). Urban Zimbabwe’s exceptionality included the relative absence of slum and squatter settlements (Potts, 2006; UN-HABITAT, 2010: 248). Harare was well planned, pleasant, and orderly with colonial privileges still intact. And unlike elsewhere in Africa, there was strict control over illegal developments and informality while infrastructure and services were maintained and wage employment remained dominant. How and to what extent the city has changed is the focus of this paper.

In a cross-continent comparative review of urban theorisation, Roy (2011) notes that although ‘peasants in cities’ and informalisation under conditions of neoliberal globalisation dominate African urban scholarship, there is also a particular concern with the geopolitical conditions and transitions of the post-apartheid/post-settler city in Southern Africa. Enduring racially aligned inequality and unhealed wounds of apartheid drive contemporary struggles for socio-spatial justice, politics and urban identities in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Socio-economic dualism (Potts, 2008) including dual land tenure systems in which rural land remains a form of insurance for the urban population mean that settler structures continues to be a relevant departure point for urban scholarship.

Significant cumulative socio-economic and political factors beyond majority rule have conspired to shape the nature of urban transitions as is abundantly clear in the resurgent literature on urban informality (Kamete, 2012, 2013a, b; Potts, 1995, 2008; Njaya, 2014a, b; Rogerson, 2016). This literature has addressed questions of evolution and determinants of the ‘informality’ concept and the efficacy of policy responses (Potts, 2008; Rogerson 2016). Questions on how to interpret informality in relation to governance (Njaya, 2014a), to planning and modernist ideas of the city (Kamete, 2013a, 2013b; Muchadenyika, 2015; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017) as well as agency and struggles from below (Gillespie, 2016) remain. While concern with impacts of top down neoliberal globalisation dominate (Potts, 1995; 2010; Mbiba and Huchzemeyer, 2002), interest on varieties of low end globalisation tied to immigrant livelihoods have become significant (Zack, 2015; Thompson and Grant, 2015). Street trading emerges as a major focus in

these studies (Kamete, 2013a, b; Njaya, 2014a, b; Zack, 2015; Rogerson, 2016). However, as emphasised in this paper, the burgeoning informality goes beyond street trading and pervades institutional and political economy practices of national and local governments (Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017; Mbiba 2017).

To fully grasp the urban transitions in Zimbabwe, one has to also consider other factors such as urban impacts of HIV/AIDSs, the specific geopolitical adventures like participating in the DRC war, pariah status of the country in international relations, indigenisation and the 'Look East Policy' (Chan and Patel, 2007) within the wider context of China's presence in Africa as well as new diaspora agency (McGregor and Primorac, 2010; Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012). And crucially, are the urban impacts of the unfinished business of *jambanja* the 'Fast Track Land Reform Program' (FTLRP) since the turn of the millennium (the definition and preference for the term *jambanja* is outlined later). Equally important is the unrelenting economic and financial crisis and undying politics since 2000. All these contemporary forces and the landscape of urban informality have a historical connection that this paper seeks to mark in addressing the question of what has become of the Sunshine City, Harare.

In a nutshell, reference to wider socio-economic forces (Rakodi, 1995: ix) is required when seeking to understand transformations of capitalist cities of post-apartheid Southern Africa. In particular, how dynamics of capitalist markets determine context specific outcomes (Harvey, 1985: 1). In this case to interrogate how *jambanja* and other forces have changed Zimbabwe's settler capitalism and what urban impacts this brings. For Harare, the challenge for scholarship is to expose the links between these structural changes and the everyday processes of its urban sprawl, poverty and informality juxtaposed to obnoxious wealth. Thus informed by a critical political economy understanding centred on *jambanja* and combined with the everyday metaphor of *zhingzhong*, this paper seeks to explain the extent to which Harare has departed from Rakodi's (1995) characterisation not only in terms of the physical outlook but also in the nature of the inherent contradictions of its political economy.

Visitors to Zimbabwe are surprised when they witness that despite two decades of a debilitating socio-economic crisis, citizens remain largely peaceful, prayerful, hospitable and humorous. New languages, rumour (Fontein, 2009), humour and metaphors (Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012) are fashioned to make sense of each phase of the crisis and mock the offending institutions. This paper adopts the '*Zhingzhong* city' metaphor to describe Harare's contemporary transitions and conditions of informality and to contrast them to those of the 'Sunshine City' label. To 'speak of transitions' (Harvey, 1985) as those in Harare 'is to understand continuities in their historicity' (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: xvii). Hence the paper uses *jambanja*, *zhingzhong* and a geo-historical political economy approach as the conceptual triumvirate to deepen understanding of urban informality and Harare's fundamental economic and institutional restructuring that were tentative in the 1990s. The origins and utility of these conceptual tools are briefly outlined next, starting with *jambanja* and then *zhingzhong*.

### **A critical note on *jambanja***

It is important to give a note on use of the concept *jambanja* in preference to FTLRP. *Jambanja* is conceptually richer and captures the change that has happened in Zimbabwe than is the case with the technical and apolitical 'land reform' terminology. *Jambanja* fully captures the 'annihilation and reconstruction' of a culture or way of life extending from settler colonialism; a violation not only of the 'sanctity' of property rights in a capitalist world but also of Whiteness and the supremacy of Whites in Africa. The trauma of this violation, rupture and loss is captured in personalised narratives such as African Tears (Buckle, 2001) in 'White Africa', in 'When a

crocodile eats the sun' Godwin (2006) and 'Mugabe and the white African' (Thompson et al. 2010)<sup>1</sup>. *Jambanja* means 'impunity' (*handikendenge, ugondidini?*), 'turning the tables upside down, rejection of existing order, revolt'.

Furthermore, meanings of *jambanja* are layered whereas 'fast track' is not. *Jambanja* is about refusing to be disciplined or to conform as are/in the daily practices of informality in Harare (Kamete, 2012; 2013a, b) at the same time as it is about disciplining society as epitomised by Zimbabwe's Operation Murambatsvina. At all scales from the state to the personal, *jambanja* was and remains a process of annihilation of the rule of law, as well as the trashing and rejection of norms that guide global, community and personal relations. Using the official government of Zimbabwe term FTLFP, 'normalises' and depoliticises' this process and denudes it of the cultural dimensions leaving it as a technical and administrative phenomenon. If it was such a technical and administrative process, Zimbabwe would not be in the quagmire that it finds itself in today. The language of FTLFP is reassuring and gives certainty and normalcy. Yet, in reality, Zimbabwe remains an uncertain terrain where life is fragile and contingent as is captured in *jambanja*. Moreover, *jambanja* was not just an event in 1999-2000, but remains the central mode of state-craft and everyday life not only in the rural country side but everywhere including in urban and peri-urban areas, in institutions and households. Zimbabwe will never be the same again; but what it will be beyond *jambanja* – nobody knows. Thus, using the Harare case, the paper employs culturally grounded notions of *jambanja* and *zhingzhong* to revisit, enrich and expand the literature on urban informality and urban transitions in Africa.

### **Beyond an ethnic metaphor: 'Zhingzhong' and the urban political economy**

With Zimbabwe's Look East Policy and the increasing number of Chinese nationals in Zimbabwe since 1999, *zhingzhong* emerged initially as a derogatory term to refer to the Chinese language that locals found incomprehensible. To locals, the language is a series of 'zhings' and 'zhongs'. Thus firstly, *zhingzhong* refers to a Chinese person or Chinese looking person<sup>2</sup>. The use of such derogatory terms to label others, abhorrent as it often is, is not unusual where different ethnic groups come into contact. For instance in South Africa and Botswana, locals label Zimbabwean and other African immigrants as *makwerekwere* or babblers whose speaking is incomprehensible (Muzondidya, 2010). But for this paper *zhingzhong* is also a metaphor with intellectual import as explained below.

The post 1990s interactions of Zimbabwe and China have witnessed increased importation of Chinese consumer products: Zimbabwe-China trade and Chinese investment in Zimbabwe has grown phenomenally and exceeds that of its former colonial master, Britain. Bilateral trade worth only US\$52.2 million in 1996 had risen to US\$1.1 billion in 2012 (Chun, 2014: 14-15). Chun (2014) argues that unlike relations with most of Africa, the trade balance is in favour of Zimbabwe. Relations have moved beyond construction projects (hospitals<sup>3</sup> and sports stadia) that had characterised the period from the 1980s or military hardware and training that have featured since the 1970s. Chinese language and cultural studies were introduced at University of Zimbabwe (in 2007) and Great Zimbabwe University while Air Zimbabwe flights to Beijing were introduced but suspended in 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> PBS NewsHour, 2011. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/mugabe/ben-freeth-on-newshour/>

<sup>2</sup> To Zimbabweans, Japanese, Koreans, Filipino, Vietnamese are all seen as *zhingzhong*.

<sup>3</sup> For example Chinhoyi Hospital (a major referral hospital in the city of Chinhoyi) and Mwenezi District Hospital in the remote south of the country.

However, Chinese consumer goods imported into Zimbabwe in the early years tended to be poor quality products; they did not last and poor people bought them because of the low prices and lack of alternatives (Fontein, 2009: 3). *Zhingzhong* thus also emerged as a derogatory term disparaging cheap Chinese goods. But it has become a metaphor for products or anything that is perceived as of inferior quality, that does not last and that is cheap. This is in contrast to ‘*mukambo*’, ‘*mupedzanhamo*’ (that which brings relief or an end to poverty) or ‘*zitye*’ that describe second hand goods especially clothing. *Zhingzhong* is an addition to the lexicon of street trading and metaphors in Zimbabwe. Crucially, *zhingzhong* is also about anything, not just goods, perceived as inferior or second grade status; the inferior infrastructure, governance systems and ideas. Thus this paper is not about wider debates on the efficacy of contemporary Africa-China economic, investment and political relations (e.g. Brautigam, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Carmody, 2011). Instead it exploits what was originally local imagination and identification of Chinese as *zhingzhong* and extrapolates it as a useful framing of urban transitions characterised by expanding informality; where scholars and policy makers say ‘informality’, ordinary citizens in Harare say *zhingzhong*.

While *zhingzhong* will be used as a surface metaphor to describe physical manifestations of urban processes in Harare especially the deterioration of infrastructure and the environment, Harvey’s (1985) characterisation of the urbanisation of capital, contradictions and crisis of capitalism (Harvey 2014) provide the deeper political economy analytical reflections needed to aid appreciation of the urban impacts of *jambanja* and *zhingzhong* within it. Despite socialist rhetoric and ‘talk left’ by ZANU (PF) when it suits (Bond and Manyanya, 2002), Zimbabwe is intrinsically a capitalist society. Hence the need to try and understand urban processes within the lense of capitalist dynamics in which cities or the built environment arise from the creation of the infrastructure for production, circulation, exchange, consumption of commodities, social reproduction of labour and means of discipline and control. Hence the primacy ‘of a functioning capital market and a state willing to finance and guarantee long-term projects with respect to the creation of the built environment (Harvey, 1985: 7).

As discussed later, ‘functioning markets’ and ‘guarantees’ depend on property rights and rule of law that *jambanja* restructured or destroyed. Thus if Zimbabwe’s *jambanja* and indigenisation of the economy have dismantled the settler economy, whether and in what way it has impacted on urban structures and processes needs explaining. What kind of urban development process has been unleashed and what city form and function prevails or can be expected in future? Both *jambanja* and indigenisation are precarious works in progress and their long-term outcomes unclear. *Zhingzhong* captures how ordinary people view the contemporary urban conditions in Zimbabwe that have emerged recently. With the broad conceptual and metaphorical tools outlined, the next section summarises the conditions leading to an absence of *zhingzhong* in the first post-independence decade.

### **Continuity and Constrained Urban Development, 1980s – 1990s**

The spatial growth of Harare is correlated to the trends in the delivery of land and housing supply for the majority low income Black population that until 1980 had no urban tenure. Public sector and employer tied accommodation were key means of housing delivery soon after independence. Despite what government presented [Table 1] as massive housing delivery between 1982 and 2000 (GoZ, 2005: 11), this supply was paltry when compared to the increasing urban housing backlog.

Goz (1986: 12) and GoZ/USAID (1994) stressed key constraints to housing development that included bottlenecks in land supply, finance and institutional setting for land development. Until

the late 1980s government constructed and supplied complete housing units. There was neither private sector housing finance nor a mortgage industry for low income housing. Workers were poorly paid, had no savings and could not afford borrowing while building societies had no experience lending to the poor and were also discouraged from doing so by unfavourable interest rates. Mortgage finance for the poor emerged with government and USAID partnership to support housing markets in the period to 1996. However, at 1992, the total national mortgage supply was a meagre 5534 per year (GoZ/USAID, 1994: 22) against a minimum requirement of 66 000 mortgages per year needed to eliminate the housing backlog by year 2000

The other major constraints were the high standards of construction and delays in the land development process, permits and titles. GoZ/USAID (1994: 27-28) reported that in Harare at 1992, it took on average of no less than forty one months to process land from identification stage to plot allocation: well above the global average of thirteen months. There were also distortions in the organisation of builders and buyers. Private sector low income housing developers were dominantly large builders whose expertise was in commercial property development; they were inefficient and had limited experience in low income housing provision. Small scale indigenous builders faced barriers to entry into the market until the late 1990s. Consequently, there was little competition in the market.

Thus inadequate funds, lack of competition, over reliance on the public sector, limited and inefficient providers and slow land delivery processes resulted in houses that the poor could not afford. Key indicators of this impact are given in [Table 2]. Increasing urban population growth and declining supply of housing resulted in chronic overcrowding within the existing stock of housing. In 1992 the entire urban population of 1.454 million were housed in 361 000 units giving an occupancy rate of six people per unit or a floor area of 7.0m<sup>2</sup> per person compared to the globally approved 18m<sup>2</sup>. This overcrowding had negative implications for environmental health and risks for spreading communicable diseases especially TB (GoZ, 1986: 33) conditions that became fatal with HIV/AIDS post 1995.

Thus until the mid-1990s, spatial growth of the city was highly formal and constrained by a combination of development constraints cited earlier and a rigorous enforcement regime. As witnessed in the case of Churu Farm in 1993/1994 (Auret, 1994) and Murambatsvina (Potts, 2006; Mbiba, 2017) the state was too ready to “fight illegally with illegality” (Hlatshwayo, 1994); squatter settlements and informal developments were brutally demolished while those inherited from colonial times such as Epworth were contained and upgraded to meet expected standards of service provision and infrastructure. Kamete (2012) has competently theorised these state actions as ‘disciplinary’ and ‘pastoral’ manifestations of state sovereign power in handling informality in Southern Africa. With such policies and capacity to act, growth beyond the city boundaries was almost non-existent.

Harare in the 1980/90s was therefore an undisputed ‘sunshine city’; *zhingzhong* as inferior landscapes, governance and livelihood practices was beyond imagination at the time. Yet the Chinese were already there in Harare; invisible but present in their support to the military as mentioned before. They also had a physical presence and footprint in the construction of public buildings such as students’ hostels at University of Zimbabwe, hospitals and significantly the 60 000 seater national sports stadium completed in 1987 and located 8km to the west of the city centre. There was a hostile but ineffective response to its construction especially from workers and University of Zimbabwe students at the time. Locals were offended by the use of Chinese labourers when unemployment was acute in the city. With protests ineffective, locals resorted to rumour. The most virulent rumour related to how the Chinese had ‘potted’ all stray dogs. The

rumour warned owners to keep a vigilant eye on their dogs. But after hosting the Sixth All Africa Games in 1995 and became a venue for major soccer matches including the Brazil-Zimbabwe friendly in 2010, the public grew to value it as a national asset; national events, political rallies, weddings, religious crusades and music festivals are staged there.

### **The Neoliberal Decade: ESAP, Indigenisation and Meltdown**

However, the settler economy and its urban manifestations that had remained intact started to unravel following the country's 1991 adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Bond and Manyanya (2002) give a comprehensive analysis of forces leading to ESAP, key features of the policy and its devastating impact on the economy, workers and households. Calamitous decisions to pay unbudgeted Z\$50,000 each to over fifty thousand war veterans on Friday 14th November 2007 and participation in the DRC war a year later at a cost of US\$1 million a day brought the economy to its knees. As Dawson and Kelsall (2012) argue, the ruling elite's pursuit of anti-developmental patrimonialism meant Zimbabwe's economy was doomed. The urban impacts of this economic collapse have been far reaching and are presented below, .

By 1996, the rising political discontent and policy unpredictability scared investors and led to capital flight. Increasingly, the economy had no surplus to invest neither in the built environment nor in social reproduction of labour. But the ruling party invested more in the security services. Military officers and police returning from the DRC War and UN Special Peace Keeping Missions emerged as among those with large amounts of foreign currency which they invested heavily in real estate; buying up existing houses and plots particularly in Harare's infill developments such as Warren Park North, Tynwald and expansions in the Bulawayo and Chinhoyi Road corridors as well as upmarket suburbs of Mt. Pleasant, Mandara and Chisipite.

As a result of ESAP's debilitating impacts, the new poor (Minujin, 1995) especially teachers and health professionals joined an emigration exodus initially to neighbouring and OECD countries from where they sent remittances that were partly invested in property (Mbiba, 2005). Infill developments such as Vainona/Mt Pleasant and Borrowdale West were typical developments dominated by remittance investments from health workers in the early part of the migration phase. The development was nicknamed '*machembere*' a derogatory name implying that remittances were earned from 'dirty' work caring for old people (*machembere*) in the UK. Thus solutions to the problem of development finance at state and institutional level were emerging in new actors at household level from the late 1990s. Although they had local authority planning approvals, most of the infill developments encroached on or took up what had previously been deemed sacrosanct city wetlands.

In the neoliberal context, government also encouraged local authorities to promote participation of Black people in small enterprises and formal sectors of the economy where they had been previously prohibited. Statutory Instrument (SI) 216 of 1994 for example required local authorities to relax urban by-laws and allow home industries and trading where this had been prohibited before. This set in the informalization of the urban space-economy. Meanwhile, the agitation of indigenous lobby groups (e.g. Indigenous Business Development Centre and Affirmative Action Group) witnessed "champions" such as Roger Boka who was not only one of the first to buy a city centre block of offices (Boka Islip House along Samora Machel Avenue) [See Figure, 1] but in 1996 went on to set up the Boka Tobacco Auctions Floors on over 12 hectares of land along Simon Marodze Road to the south of the city. These are now the leading trading space for tobacco. However his United Merchant Bank collapsed on the back of irregular trading and bad debts (loans given mainly to ZANU (PF) politicians and businesses)

(Dawson and Kelsall, 2012). The drivers of the demise of Boka's bank were precursors of worse things to come post 2000 when several banks were liquidated and Zimbabwe became a 'casino economy' (Gono, 2008).

The liberalised political economy and 'indigenisation' policy<sup>4</sup> was used as a cover for the emergence of dealer developers who used insider information within local authorities to manipulate the planning and land development system leading to developments that would not have been permissible before. These irregular or opaque developments include Sam Levy Village in Borrowdale (see City of Harare, 2005/2006), paradoxically now the most prestigious out of town shopping centre [see Figure 2]. The Thompson Report (GoZ, 1999) provides details of irregular practices across the city during this period; notably those by Harare City Mayor Solomon Tawengwa in Highfield and at Corner Samora Machel Avenue and Enterprise Road on the eastern edge of the CBD. These contentious and irregular developments like Sam Levy Village were subsequently 'regularized' by the planning authorities. However, they became a template for rampant elite and local authority-led irregular developments during the economic crisis a decade later (see City of Harare 2010). These developments including the most recent Chinese Longcheng Plaza Mall (to be presented later) are world class in physical terms but '*zhingzhong*' in the way they shredded, abused and cheapened land use and planning systems.

Traditional institutional investors such as Old Mutual, the Mining Industry Pension Fund and the recently established National Social Security Authority also invested in commercial city centre offices of an urban regeneration nature (e.g. Eastgate Shopping Mall and offices), out of town shopping malls, high and middle income residential developments. Arundel Shopping Centre, Mt. Pleasant Shopping Centre to the north of the city, and city centre buildings like NSSA, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Joina Centre and Corner House were products of this era that were either urban regeneration or infill development in nature. ZIMRE Park to the north east was an example of expansion development as was OMPIC's (1995) Bluff Hill Westgate Development on a 550 ha peri-urban farm.

In terms of the *zhingzhong* metaphor, there were neither physical Chinese related developments nor a Chinese presence of significance during this ESAP era. But relaxation of by-laws in the context of the SI 216 as well as dealer developments saw a creeping polarisation and dilution of the quality of both governance and the physical environment including in the city centre. Harare City Council allowed 'Flea Markets' where traders could sell any merchandise; mostly imported clothing, kitchenware and other consumer items. Coupled with increased importation of second hand cars, thanks to trade de-regulation, Harare city centre became congested and unclean. Readily available imported second hand minibuses replaced old Peugeot 404 vehicles and government public transport in the form of ZUPCO buses. With increasing bureaucratic poverty and militarisation of the economy, the control and operation of these new forms of public transport have become a terrain of systemic police corruption including soliciting of bribes at ubiquitous road blocks that any traveller will encounter in Zimbabwe<sup>5</sup>. Institutional abuse rather than proper enforcement of rules prevails; hence another dimension of *zhingzhong* emerged. The minibuses enabled commuting to peripheral areas that had been unreachable by ZUPCO buses. This created conditions for rapid urban sprawl into areas lacking water, sewer, roads and electricity infrastructure. The impact of these myriad factors are such that Harare's

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<sup>4</sup> Subsequently consolidated as "Indigenisation and Economic empowerment Act [Chapter 14: 33] 2007, Government of Zimbabwe.

<sup>5</sup> See "Chihuri admits cops are corrupt" The Herald, Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017, On-line: <http://www.herald.co.zw/chihuri-admits-cops-are-corrupt/> [last visited 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017]



structure, institutions and land use patterns gradually became considerably different from those of its settler colonial past.

### **Plunge and *Jambanja*: First Decade of the Millennium and Beyond**

The plunge has two meanings in this paper. First, in line with Bond and Manyanya (2002) it refers to the point when the economy and subsequent political and social conditions plummeted rapidly from 1997/98 reaching peak crisis in 2008/2009 (Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012).

Second it refers to *jambanja*, as the decisive actions to proceed and dispossess thousands of white farmers and handing over the land to thousands of peasants and those pledging support to ZANU (PF) the ruling party. Following years of prevarication, this bold move was cataclysmic in the short term. This section signposts the nature of economic collapse, its socio-economic dimensions and spatial manifestations and how *jambanja* as an ongoing process is implicated in the expansion and intensification of informality.

*Jambanja* effects from 2000, cemented and accelerated an economic meltdown of the neoliberal era. Although the ESAP of the 1990s, 1997 Black Friday and participation in the DRC war (1998) had significant economic impacts they were not as foundational as *jambanja*. *Jambanja* was foundational in that it destroyed the market value of rural agricultural land that acted as the collateral basis upon which long term development lending was based. Without the individual property rights to rural land and rule of law, capital has no security and there is no capitalism as experienced since 1890; no bank lending to rural agriculture, no production, processing, trading, exporting and all the related employment. Post *jambanja* bank lending has been mainly short term (30 days or ninety days). This only enables short term investment which is of a buying and selling nature. Hence the economy shifted from job creating production and manufacturing to importing and selling of consumer products making Zimbabwe an economy of traders ever since. The liquidity crisis that set in is exacerbated by 'pillow banking', externalisation or cash simply not being released into an economy where the traditional collateral security is non-existent.

Government's responses to the liquidity crisis have only shifted and expanded the crisis. Printing of money by the RBZ accelerated hyperinflation leading to the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar. Equally, Gono's (2008) description of how the economy became a casino economy is correct as a description of irregular practices by banks, businesses and ordinary people seeking to amass wealth in an insecure environment. A shift from formality to informality and collapse of industry has characterised the economy. Rakodi (1995: 110) reported that Harare had firms that employed 317 267 workers. However, fifteen years later in 2010, the total number of employees had dropped to 260 100 (ZimStat, 2013:11) against a total population that had almost doubled. Crucially, in 1990, manufacturing in Harare employed about 93 518 workers making about 30% of the total workforce in the province. But by 2012, manufacturing jobs had dropped to 41 881 (ZimStat, 2012: 75) and making a paltry 5.6% of all employees in the Harare Province. In place of manufacturing, the city economy is now dominated by services, trading, the informal sector, self-employment and imported consumer goods.

The collapse of the formal economy and growth of informality has meant an ever shrinking revenue base for both national and local governments. Avoidance of taxes is now a key feature of both formal and informal businesses. Consequently, the financial and liquidity crisis at City



of Harare that had set in by 1996 (GoZ, 1999) has become endemic<sup>6</sup>. Thus Harare has become a ‘*zhingzhong city*’ in terms of its economy, its governance, quality of infrastructure and services [Figure 3]. For instance, census figures (ZimStat, 2012: 127 and 132-133) portray a positive service provision situation where 75.8% of the population has electricity, 78.9 % have water on their premises and 85% have flush toilets. But these figures are nominal and mask a desperate situation where water rarely comes out of the taps and when it does, is dirty and not suitable for human consumption. With rapid urban sprawl in the last fifteen years, the new peri-urban residential areas lack water, electricity supply, waterborne sanitation and solid waste removal services. Combined with the decayed infrastructure<sup>7</sup> in the older parts of the city, the spectre of ill-health and diseases such as cholera hangs over the city (UN-HABITAT, 2010: 210 - 211).

*Jambanja* and its impacts coincided with other significant demographic changes in the country. The collapse of health services, water and other infrastructure at the beginning of the new millennium coincided with the exponential growth in HIV/AIDS related deaths with devastating impacts on labour, service delivery, family cohesion and cities. Urban cemeteries filled up and *kuMbudzi*, the cemetery next to Boka Tobacco Auction Floors had taken 14 000 burials in seven years from when it was opened in 1997 (Mbiba, 2010: 154-155). This devastation had not been expected.

The socio-economic collapse that ensued following *jambanja* is legendary; collapse of industry, the currency, livelihoods and infrastructure. The exodus to neighbouring countries, Europe and beyond accelerated ushering in a new phenomenon – diaspora. Financial, food and material remittances from the diaspora emerged not only as the largest humanitarian contribution but also a source of further investment in real estate. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe set up a facility ‘Home Link (Pvt) Ltd’ incorporated in 2004, with a view to exploit the remittances market particularly in residential developments<sup>8</sup>. However, the mistrust between the diaspora and ZANU (PF) government led to furtive operations of this project since inception (Fingaz, 2004; New Zimbabwe, 2004; Mbiba, 2005) with most recent initiatives to reinvigorate it up-scaled in 2014.

With collapse of formal sector jobs, rapid informalisation ensued including in the city centre. As a strategy to retain control of the economy and contain a restive population, the ZANU (PF) government creates ‘turbulence’ to generate uncertainty and to disturb the emergence of any cohesive mass upheaval. The massive nationwide Operation Murambatsina/Restore Order 2005 (GoZ, 2005; Potts, 2006) has to be seen in this light. It destroyed almost all informal trading, house extensions and livelihoods; driving many further into poverty (Banana et al. 2016) or into the diaspora while creating a sense of uncertainty and fear among those that remained.

But key to underline are the other urban land use impacts of *jambanja* on Harare’s urban land use alluded to in a number of papers (Marongwe, 2003; Kamete, 2012; Banana et al. 2016). The destruction of rural large scale farms displaced former farm workers, thousands of whom sought livelihoods in the urban and peri-urban areas of Harare. Secondly, ZANU (PF) (plus other land

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<sup>6</sup> See “Harare City Council owed US\$280 million” Zimbabwe Situation, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Online: [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit\\_w\\_radiovop-zimbabwe-harare-city-council-owed-280m/](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_w_radiovop-zimbabwe-harare-city-council-owed-280m/) [last visited 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017]

<sup>7</sup> The City loses 60% by value of treated water due to leakages in the dilapidated pipe system, see page 10, City of Harare, State of the City Address by the Mayor, Cllr Bernard G. Manyenyeni, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, Harare.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://homelinkzim.com/> (last visited 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017).

barons and a range of actors) illegally made peri-urban land available to its supporters or anyone who could promise support to the party (Muchadenyika, 2015; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017; Mbiba, 2017). Urban and peri-urban land became a resource for political patronage and survival. The systems of land allocation and delivery diligently protected and maintained in previous decades were now suspended, abandoned and despised. The outcome of this was not just rapid urban infill (Mbiba, 2000; Kamusoko et al. 2013) and spatial urban expansion beyond previous boundaries (Mbiba, 2017) but also a disdain for urban planning controls (Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017). This disdain for planning is palpable among both political elites and institutions who seek to grab land and among the poor seeking plots for housing or trading space (Kamete, 2013,a, b). Thus the urban outcomes of *jambanja* bring us back to *zhingzhong*; informality, chaotic and poor quality urban environments.

Harare has emerged as a *zhingzhong* city in the sense that goods sold in both formal and informal spaces of Harare are now of Chinese origin (Figure 4). Whole zones from edges of Magaba, Charter Road and Kopje in the south west of the city to Samora Machel in the north and on either side of Robert Mugabe all the way to Fourth Street Road Port (to the east), the city has become informal with trading on the streets (see also Njaya, 2014a, b; Rogerson, 2016). New enclaves of money making have emerged where young entrepreneurs take advantage of the collapse of the city governance and corrupting it as they go along. A significant chunk of the money earned in these ‘informal enclaves’ is ‘exported’ to enclave residential developments beyond Borrowdale to the north east of the city<sup>9</sup>.

Relative to the 1980s and 1990s, Harare city of today is chaotic, noisier and dirty with improper disposal of waste and irregular developments on wetlands as confirmed recently in parliament by the Hon. Minister of Environment, Water and Climate recently (Zimbabwe Hansard, 2017). In land use and development terms, there is another dimension in that Chinese investors, purportedly working in alliance with military officers<sup>10</sup> are among those that have grabbed, privatised and developed pieces of open spaces reserved for public uses or wetlands. The most visible and ‘notorious’ case cited by key informants is the Longcheng Plaza, Belvedere, opened to the public in December 2013 (The Sunday Mail, 2013: ; Zimbabwe Hansard, 2017). Considered together with the National Sports Stadium, a belt of land bounded by Princes Road (to the north), Bulawayo Road (to the south), Golden Quarry Road (to the west) and Mutley Bend Road (to the east) can now be considered a ‘*zhingzhong zone*’ (Figure 5). Further planned developments by the Chinese investors in this zone include a hotel. Consequently, new ‘*zhingzhong*’ land uses and Chinese architecture are now an emerging feature of urban Harare as are the ‘*zhingzhong*’ goods, quality of infrastructure and governance.

Indeed the Chinese are not the only culprits developing on Harare’s wetlands or engaged in land grabbing or illegal land development as evidenced in the commission of inquiry reports (GoZ, 1999) and for Chitungwiza and Caledonia (see Mbiba, 2017: 10-11). The millennium shopping centre project in Borrowdale, billed to be the largest investment in recent years, has to be included in this bracket. However, in contrast to the other offenders key informants in the bureaucracy, were of the view that the Chinese developers make little effort to engage and regularise as was the case for example with Sam Levy. Furthermore, Longcheng Plaza is in a location more visible to the majority of the poor - hence it gets mentioned more often than the others in prime low density high income residential areas. Beyond the Chinese, and aided by the

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<sup>9</sup> Business Key Informant, Harare, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014

<sup>10</sup> Key informant interview, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014

patronage system around land allocation that has emerged since 2000, residents, businesses have erected houses and developments without land-use planning approval thus destroying the planning system (Kamete, 2012; 2013a, b; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017) pivotal in maintaining the image of Harare as a Sunshine City till the 1990s.

The cumulative spatial effects of the neoliberal reforms, *jambanja* and demographic changes are witnessed in rapid sprawl of the city and growth in built development. Analysis of satellite images (Kamusoko et al. 2013) show that through infill, expansion and leapfrog developments it took only fifteen years from 1999, for the built up growth to cover a land area similar to that which had taken over 115 years since 1890. The western and southward expansion in built development especially on either side of the Harare to Masvingo Highway is in line with proposals of the 1991 Harare Combination Master Plan (HCMP). However, that plan did not anticipate that growth would be rapid and in other directions such as north east into Goromonzi-Ruwa and Arcturus (Mbiba, 2017), or to the north into Mazowe District and worse still into Lake Chivero's basin to the west of the city. Before *jambanja*, the HCMP had argued that infrastructure constraints and the need to protect prime commercial agricultural land would limit growth into these areas. But with *jambanja* the large scale commercial farms have disappeared and are largely state land administered by the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement. On request from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, some of this land can be released for urban development. Recent peri-urban developments have proceeded without incorporation of the land into urban areas as per legal requirements (Mbiba, 2017). The prohibitive cost of land for urban expansion has also disappeared. Growth has proceeded informally, patchily with no supporting infrastructure and services creating a *zhingzhong* landscape.

### **Conclusions: Harare – continuity and change**

This paper contributes case study material to the understanding of unfolding world transitions especially the rapid urban transformations in Africa dominant in contemporary research (Gough and Willis, 2016) and policy debates on transformative urbanisation (UN-HABITAT, 2008; 2010; OECD/AfDB, 2016). For a first-time visitor to Harare, Rakodi's (1995) diagnosis of Harare as a European city in Africa and one that works - a sunshine city - appears still relevant especially if viewed from the comforts of many of the city's hotels or the top floor of one of the sprouting skyscrapers; continuities abound. However, beyond the hotel comforts, for residents of the city and those monitoring its welfare over the years, the label of a 'sunshine city' has been replaced by one of '*zhingzhong*'. The paper has used *zhingzhong* not just as a reference to highlight the upsurge in Chinese presence and Chinese products marketed on the streets but importantly as a metaphor (Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012) for low quality and decay in the infrastructure, services to corruption of institutions especially planning and local government (Kamete, 2012, 2013a, b; Mbiba, 2017; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017) and to governance and general urban economic decay of the city. *Zhingzhong* is one of many metaphors Zimbabweans have invented to give meaning to and make sense of the crises they have experienced since the 1990s era of ESAP (Zimbabweans caricatured it as a policy designed for the *Extended Suffering of African People*).

In its call to interrogate post-settler capitalist colonial cities such as Harare in this paper suggests that we employ Harvey's (1985) understanding of a capitalist city in which the city is a socio-spatial manifestation of processes of capital accumulation, expansion and mobility. Anchoring these processes are the systems of individual property rights and rural land values that previously acted as collateral for bank credit and lending that underpinned the settler colonial economy. For Zimbabwe, neoliberal reforms of the 1990s reinforced the operation and

sanctity of these systems. Similarly, while crises like the Black Friday of 1997, participation in the DRC war in 1998 and HIV/Aids had significant economic and finance impacts, they were not a direct attack on these capitalist foundations. *Jambanja* changed this. But while in *jambanja* the ruling elites abolished rural property rights, they have been both shrewd and ‘cynical’ in their maintenance of urban property rights. In Harvey’s (1985; 2003) terms, this enables urban land to be an accumulation sphere and investment destination of surpluses earned or robbed elsewhere including in the rural sphere.

The paper’s narrative suggests research is needed to understand how in each epoch since the 1980s, finance has shifted from one sector to another, into and out of the built environment. It exposed the different actors involved, and how the role and nature of the state and the framework of rules deployed have all changed. The policy attempts to indigenise the economy within the context of ESAP created opportunities for accumulation and the emergence of a new *vigilante* capitalist class but little investment went into production, infrastructure and services. The state’s capacity to deliver was also eroded by ESAP. During the phases to ESAP, *zhingzhong* existed in the form of Chinese investments in public infrastructure and buildings and support to the military whose history can be traced to the 1970s. But the city remained ‘the sunshine city’ until *jambanja*.

*Jambanja* was the foundational or structural change that created conditions for a ‘global’ crisis and expansion of *zhingzhong*. *Jambanja* abolished individual property rights in the rural agricultural land. For an agro-industry based economy, this removed the collateral basis for lending in the economy. The emerging political crisis from 2000 became a ‘global’ crisis (Harvey, 1985: 13) in that it affected all sectors, all spheres of life, all regions of the country, neighbouring states, geopolitical and international relations with former colonial powers in Europe. Moreover, without investment in production, the collapse of industry, employment and incomes led to a collapse of the revenue base and lines of credit. Consequently, the liquidity crisis of City of Harare since mid-1990s, like that of the country has become intractable. The city transformed from a manufacturing city to a ‘city of traders’ in imported consumer goods. The rules and planning laws that regulated urban and peri-urban space for capitalist markets to thrive have been abandoned or abused (Mbiba, 2017; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017). Chinese investment and actors have become bigger players while western capital ‘ran for cover’ relocating to other countries<sup>11</sup>.

For citizens, *zhingzhong* describes and gives meaning to a city whose infrastructure has collapsed, the management unable to intervene meaningfully and survival is through irregular predatory means or ‘by the Grace of God’. *Zhingzhong* also captures the societal attitudes, practices and institutional norms that now characterise everyday life in the city. Resort to open defiance, endemic informality and public spirituality have become some of the obvious major phenomena. Chinese products on the streets compete with Christian music CDs and related paraphernalia while mega Christian Church buildings compete for skyline prominence against the office blocks and Chinese malls. However, if the Chinese and irregular origins of malls such as Longcheng Plaza are put to the side, what remains are not only spaces of capitalist expansion but also continuing contradictions (Harvey, 2014) with juxtaposition of acute poverty and ‘stinking’ wealth. However, this juxtaposition of environmental decay and acute poverty in

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<sup>11</sup> See “No EU funding for ZIMASSET” page 2, The Zimbabwe Independent, Harare, 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014; “US\$2bn Chinese bailout: Mugabe to Visit China for package this month” pages 1 -2 The Zimbabwe Independent, Harare, 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

large parts of the city with obnoxious affluence is not unique to Harare but is typical of the inequalities prevailing in capitalist societies of Southern Africa.

Rakodi's (1995) narrative pointed to Harare enduring as a settler colonial city devoid of slums (Potts, 2006). The physical, governance and ideational legacy of the settler period was remarkably strong and persistent, partly because the built environments were inherently long lasting, but not least because keeping white capital happy served the purposes of the government at that time. This paper has illustrated how the strains from the inherent contradictions manifested themselves recently in *jambanja*. It argued for *jambanja* to be seen beyond the narrow 'time bound' land restricted definition to a multi-layered conception that embodies foundational change and enduring state impunity that has now spread to all avenues of society; contemporary urban informality thrives in and is an inevitable outcome of *jambanja*. It is *jambanja* impunity that has led to the breakdown and destruction of the capitalist relations, good governance, vibrant industrial sector, well managed physical environments, infrastructure and an ideational legacy that qualified Harare as a sunshine city to one whose identity is best captured by ordinary people's metaphor of a '*zhingzhong* city'.

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Figure 1: Boka Islip House on Samora Machel Avenue © Beacon Mbiba, August 2014





Figure 2: Outside and Inside Sam Levy Village, Borrowdale. © Beacon Mbiba, August 2014





Figure 3: Samora Machel Avenue Cnr Julius Nyerere: Flooded Streets, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Poor solid waste management and collapsed drains lead to city wide flooding including in the CBD



Figure 4: Zhongwei Distributors: Nelson Mandela Avenue opposite Hurudza House. Former prime CBD shops are now dingy warehouses or informal trading spaces for Chinese consumer products. © Beacon Mbiba, August 2014



Figure 5: Longcheng Plaza location next to National Sports Stadium.



Table 1: Statistics on National Public Sector Housing Development: 1982 - 2000

Year	Allocation (Z\$)	Houses Completed	No. of Stands Delivered	
1982 - 83	59 500 000	12 089	13 875	
1983 - 84	31 700 000	9 565	3000	
1984 - 85	34 800 000	5 031	9 800	
1985 - 86	52 900 000	6 124	14 845	
1986 - 87	35 300 000	5 230	11 223	
1987 - 88	34 900 000	4 862	16 500	
1988 - 89	30 800 000	400	4 292	
1989 - 90	49 900 000	532	6 951	
1990 - 91	40 000 000	573	26 667	
1991 - 92	34 700 000	315	5 552	
1992 - 93	40 500 000	2143	27 000	Policy change from complete houses to plots and self built.
1993 - 94	80 000 000	-	53 333	
1994 - 95	37 000 000	-	7 400	
1996 - 97	10 000 000	-	2 000	
1997 - 98	31 000 000	-	6 200	
1999	672 728 808	-	44 848	
2000	810 299 292	-	54 020	

Source: Bulk of figures from GoZ (2005: 11)

Table 2: Indicators to Urban Land Delivery and Development Constraints in Harare

Indicator/Constraint	Harare	Bulawayo	Mutare
Low levels of low income housing production. Low income serviced stands/plots provided per 1000 people in 1992	1.08	6.72	2.29
1992 Price per serviced stand/plot for low income housing	Z\$7 137.00	Z\$3513.00	-
1992 delays in land delivery for low income housing; permitting and title delays in months	41.65	35.75	38.15

Source: Compiled from GoZ/USAID (1994)